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United States
Department of
Agriculture
Food and
Nutrition Service

The Friday Letter

Vol. 8 No. 19

OCT 21 '88

October 14, 1988

USDA Celebrates National Drug Free America Week

USDA is pleased to announce its support of the National Campaign for a Drug Free America. The consequences of illegal drug use are of major concern to all of us. Illegal drug use is a public health threat at every level--in our homes, schools, communities, and businesses. It undermines our economy, threatens our national security, and ruins and destroys lives, including those of our young people.

NATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR A



October 24-30 has been designated as "National Drug Free America Week." The National Campaign for a Drug Free America is a bipartisan, national campaign involving Cabinet officials, Members of Congress, and the private sector to mobilize the Nation in a vigorous, unified, drug prevention effort. The campaign will culminate in a week's worth of concentrated activities.

The focus of the campaign is "What Works--Next Steps." Its primary goals

(Drug Free Continued Next Page)

CFC Needs Our Support

Come join fellow FNS'ers as we kick off the 1988 Combined Federal Campaign at Park Office Center on October 20 at 2:00 p.m. in Conference Room 400.



1989 COMBINED FEDERAL CAMPAIGN

This year's theme is "Someone is Waiting for You to Make a Difference."

Administrator Anna Kondratas will launch the afternoon's activities, which will include a film and entertainment. Those of you who attended last year's kickoff will remember it was a very enjoyable afternoon.

Our goal for 1988 is \$53,324.00. Lets see if "we can make a difference," all 577 of us.

See you there!

-Story by Mary Kennedy
Public Information Staff

Flu Season is Upon Us Again

Any FNS employee who would like to receive a flu shot may do so on October 18 at the Park Office Center Health Unit, Room 218, from 2 to 3 p.m. The cost is \$3.00.

are to strengthen existing education programs and to stimulate new, community based prevention programs by mobilizing concerned parents, business leaders, civic, social, and youth groups nationwide. Federal resources and leadership will enhance prevention and education efforts in both the public and private sectors. President Reagan said, "The Federal government is committed to doing all in its power to stop drug abuse and drug trafficking, but ultimate victory will be determined by individual Americans working within their home, workplace, and community."

Patio Event and Red Ribbon Campaign Planned

USDA will play a part in National Drug Free America Week. On October 26, in the Patio of the Administration Building from 10 to 10:30 a.m., various agencies will be recognized for their efforts in the war against drugs. USDA employees in the Washington area are encouraged to attend.

Employees are also encouraged to wear a red ribbon on their clothing during this week. A Red Ribbon Campaign was initiated by The National Federation of Parents for Drug-Free Youth in 1985 when Federal Agent Enrique Camarena was murdered by drug traffickers. The red ribbon has become the symbol to reduce the demand for drugs and to live a drug-free, healthy lifestyle. Ribbons will be available to FNS employees October 24 at Park Office Center, and a flyer will be distributed with additional information.

This is a unique opportunity for USDA to be part of a movement that will continue to fight illegal drug use. With your cooperation, we can make a difference. Let's work together to give future generations a healthy tomorrow.

-Story by Mary Kennedy
Public Information Staff

WIC National Advisory Council Holds Annual Meeting

A meeting of the National Advisory Council on Maternal, Infant and Fetal Nutrition was recently held to update the Council members on recent developments in the WIC and CSF Programs.

In addition, Dr. Richard Narkewicz, president, American Academy of Pediatrics, addressed the Council on infant feeding issues. However, the majority of the meeting was a working session for the Council to discuss and draft recommendations for its 1988 report to the President and Congress. Public Law 95-627 requires the Council to make a continuing study of the operations of WIC and CSFP to determine how the programs may be improved and to submit a report with recommendations every two years.

Seven new Council members attended the meeting. They are Charlotte Bedell, district chief of nutrition, Georgia Department of Human Resources, Albany, Georgia; Yolanda Cleffi, a parent participant in the WIC Program, Hoboken, New Jersey; Mary Ellis, director of Public Health, Iowa State Department of Health, Des Moines, Iowa; Donald Johnson, management services coordinator, Utah State Department of Health, Salt Lake City, Utah; Mary Kassler, state WIC director, Massachusetts State Department of Health, Boston, Massachusetts; Herbert-Ann Kisle, home economist for the Tennessee Division of the Malone and Hyde Food Companies, Southaven, Mississippi; and Deanna M. Yarboro, a representative of a nonprofit public interest organization, West Middlesex, Pennsylvania.

-Story by Doris Dvorscak
Supplemental Food Programs Division

Dickey Receives Top SES Award



OAE Director Tom Sullivan (left) congratulates SWRO Administrator Gene Dickey at the FNS honor award reception.

How does one graciously accept the most prestigious award that a member of the Senior Executive Service can earn? Gene Dickey was recently asked that question when he received the Presidential Rank Award for Meritorious Executive.

When asked how he felt, Dickey said, "I feel very honored. And I view this award as something on behalf of all employees in FNS." He said he has received a lot of support from people in FNS during his many years here, and "I view this award as a symbol of that support."

As regional administrator of the Southwest Regional Office, Dickey was singled out for his exemplary service in communicating with governors, commissioners, and their staffs. Those contacts allowed him to obtain prompt and meaningful commitments for effective state actions and to resolve problems before they mushroomed into crises.

Dickey has led the way in returning regional office-administered programs to state administration. He has also expanded the role of field office staffs throughout the region's five-state area

to the point that field offices now deal with nearly all areas of program operations.

Dickey has served in a variety of agency positions during his career in FNS--from section chief to acting administrator. He previously won the Presidential Rank Award for Meritorious Executive in 1983.

-Story by Linda Boling
Photo by Larry Rana
Public Information Staff

Missouri Ready for Child Care

The long-awaited transfer of the regional office-administered Child-Care Food Program to the Missouri Department of Health (MDH) is moving toward the October 1 completion date. Health Department officials have been interested in assuming the program for some time, but they had to wait until the legislature officially sanctioned its budget allocation.

Mountain Plains Special Nutrition Programs staff and a member of the Independence, Missouri, field office staff recently conducted an orientation and training session for the newly appointed director of the MDH program, Deborah Markenson. During August and September, MDH will send renewal agreements to program sponsors; in August, MPRO and the Independence field office will assist with workshops for approved sponsors.

During Fiscal Year 1987, under regional office administration of the program, more than 13 million meals were served to Missouri youngsters in 425 child-care centers and 1,108 family day-care homes. It is expected that all current sponsors and some new ones will apply for approval in the new Missouri-administered program.

-Story by Joanne Widner
MPRO Public Affairs Staff

"Dare to be a 10!"

Challenging employees to "Dare to be a 10," management executive Sharon Fountain told an FNS audience that state of mind and sense of self-worth are more important than physical attractiveness.

President of Performance Development Corporation, Fountain also emphasized the need to distinguish between identity and role, adding, "people get these confused."

The Federal Women's Program sponsored Fountain's session September 7.



Speaker Sharon Fountain (left) talks to Federal Women's Program Manager Vicky Urcuyo before the presentation.

Fountain holds a master of science degree in human resource development from the American University/National Training Laboratory. Her firm is engaged in management and sales training and international consulting. Background in management, sales, and marketing is supplemented by 20 years of Fountain's experience working with the Department of Defense.

The main points she emphasized in her talk at FNS were:

--Being a "10" is not a measure of physical attractiveness, it is a state of mind and self-worth. Professionals, regardless of their major roles in life

(family, social, or career), realize that the keys to success lie in dealing effectively with other people, having a healthy self-image, and a thorough understanding of themselves. They understand the importance of being able to separate who they are from the things they do as a person. This is a critical aspect of being a "10."

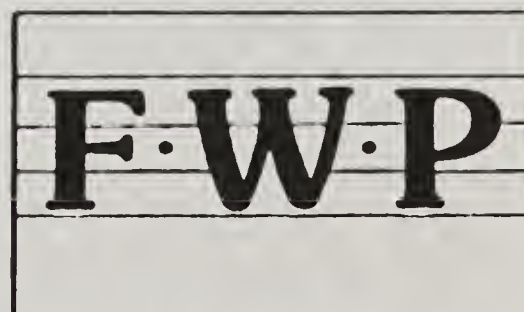
--**Self-talk**, Fountain said, is an inner dialogue that we all have in our heads. This voice can be either constructive or destructive to our self-esteem. We are the ones who are in control of what we say to ourselves. Self-talk and identity are interrelated--one reinforces the other. If we understand the concept of identity and role separation, we can prevent the bind it can cause.

--Fountain said, "**identity and role** are separate, and people get these confused. Our identity makes us unique. It is never a finished product--it is an ever evolving process. Different things contribute to our identity characteristics, and these are neither right nor wrong and cannot be evaluated until they're put into a role."

"Nothing improves your intrinsic value as a human being," Fountain said.

"Nothing you do will make you more valuable as a human being. We are all '10's.' Allow yourself to be a 10. This makes you more powerful and increases your self-esteem."

-Story by Mary Kennedy
Public Information Staff



Federal Women's Program

OIC Initiates Innovative Computer System

The first on-line computer connection between a state agency and an FNS field office is now a reality, according to Tonia Harr, officer-in-charge of the Columbia, South Carolina, Field Office.

"It's working beautifully," said Harr of the linkup between South Carolina's Department of Social Services and the Columbia Field Office. "Automation has helped to streamline many areas of work."

For example, food stamp quality control (QC) responsibilities are now easier to perform because food program specialists can complete much of their QC rereviews without leaving the office. State policy changes also can be monitored as they are transmitted to local county offices. Harr and her staff are also able to obtain information on food stamp clients' resources, income, and work history.

In order to validate the state's quality control error rate, the Columbia Field Office is required to complete a subsample of 400 cases per year selected from the state agency sample. By using the computer, along with the mailing of county case records to the field office for review, much of the quality control work can be conducted in the field office. This streamlining allows the Columbia staff to meet federal rereview requirements more efficiently.

According to Harr, the savings is evident in staff time and travel dollars, and the rereviews now can be conducted at the Columbia Field Office's convenience.

Although the field office has had computer access at the state agency for three years, the idea of a computer link was not discussed until several months ago. With the support of SERO Administrator Virgil Conrad and regional Field Operations Director Louis Mathis, Harr made the necessary arrangements with South Carolina.

By March 1988, the Columbia Field Office and the state of South Carolina had made FNS history with the agency's first direct state computer linkup.



Tonia Harr (right) discusses with her supervisor, Louis Mathis, the Columbia Field Office idea for a computer linkup with the state of South Carolina.

-Story and photo by Steve Watson
SERO Public Affairs Staff

Nebraska Conducts CCFP "Test"

Nebraska officials who are convinced of the benefits of program computerization have developed a new wrinkle for the Child-Care Food Program (CCFP). They are using standardized test answer sheets to monitor program participation figures.

The state's finance department determined that it made more sense for Nebraska to pay actual meal counts rather than percentage estimates. State Child Nutrition Programs Director Jack Baillie and resident computer expert Mike Kissler, assisted by a

(Nebraska Continued Next Page)

sponsor-provider advisory council, put together parameters to test the new forms.

Baillie, who teaches computer classes at a community college, decided that even if the scanning test didn't work, it could point the way to something similar.

The first demonstration, in April, taught them that the forms were not fold-spindle-multilate-proof. However, the principle has possibilities. Baillie and Kissler believe scanning offers more accuracy and will use less staff time.

Kissler proposed modifying the familiar standardized test sheets to get better counts. But for its initial test, Nebraska decided to use standardized forms to avoid the expense of customizing a form. Baillie plans to design an answer sheet on NCR "carbonless" paper to allow centers to keep a copy to reconcile with the state's report.

The standard sheet can be used as is to determine a child's monthly participation. The sheet can be coded for meal types and includes space for additional information.

The new system will allow for an average of two days' mailing time, three days' processing, and should return a report by the 10th of the month. Nebraska will use a Scantron data terminal and Scanform software to process the data from the answer sheets. Built-in flags alert the state to the provision of more than three meals per day to a child or more than two major meals. It also tabulates Title XX figures.

As the pilot project is evaluated, more data should be available as to the pros and cons of this new principle.

-Story by Joanne Widner
MPRO Public Affairs Staff

Oklahoma Launches New Crackdown on Food Stamp Error

The Oklahoma Department of Human Services (ODHS) has launched a tough new program to reduce fraud and error in its food stamp distribution operation.

ODHS Director Phil Watson, Southwest Regional Administrator Gene Dickey, and other state and local officials kicked off the statewide campaign at press conferences recently in Tulsa and Oklahoma City.

Stricter applicant interviews and detailed followups are the key points initiated to bring Oklahoma's error rate within the prescribed tolerance level.

Watson, in his prepared statement, said, "We are pledging to get our house in order and, within a maximum of two years, we are going to be within that 5 percent tolerance level of the Feds."



Regional Administrator Gene Dickey (second from right) is pictured with officials of the Oklahoma Department of Human Services. Shown (left to right) are Deputy Director George Miller; Josh Bohanon, program supervisor; Charles Garrett, division administrator; Phil Watson, director; Dickey; and Raymond Haddock, programs coordinator.

-Story by Blanche Jackson
SWRO Public Affairs Office
Photo provided by the Oklahoma
Department of Human Services

Regional Personnel Officers Meet in Virginia

Headquarters and regional personnel officers recently met to improve FNS' personnel system. The National Finance Center and the Office of Operations also participated.

Discussions began with pressing personnel program issues and the need to develop a national personnel agenda. Other topics were recruitment and staffing, classification and organization, career ladders, employee relations, and automated systems.

Each region had an opportunity to air its present and future personnel needs, problems, and possible solutions. Alternatives emerged for new ways to perform personnel duties agencywide. Once implemented, the new programs and procedures will allow personnel offices to serve employees better.

-Story by Diane Bohling
Personnel Division

MPRO States Achieve Below-Average Error Rates

Four of the 10 MPRO states have achieved error rates at or below the 5-percent tolerance level for the Food Stamp Program for Fiscal Year 1987. North Dakota at 3.42 percent and South Dakota at 2.53 are among four states nationally that will receive enhanced funding. Kansas (4.41 percent) and Utah (4.23) are also below the tolerance level, according to Pamela Blattner, supervisor of the MPRO Quality Control Unit.

Based on data for 7 months of Fiscal Year 1988, the regional error rate is 4.9 percent, and seven of the 10 MPRO states are at or below the 5-percent tolerance level.

-Story by Joanne Widner
MPRO Public Affairs Staff

MPRO States Exchange Management Evaluation Methodology

A recent Denver meeting drew top-level food stamp staff from all MPRO states. They met with regional office staff, field office reviewers, and Cecilia Fitzgerald of the Program Accountability Division to share management evaluation ideas and to look at Fiscal Year 1989 review elements.

Fitzgerald gave the 40 participants an overview of program reporting formats. Regional office staff detailed mandatory and optional review elements. Ralph Merrill of MPRO's food stamp staff talked about employment and training areas requiring special attention: components, work registration, exemptions, participant reimbursement, contractor contracts, disqualifications, and financial management involvement. Other staffers covered the application process, program access, expedited service, household rights, fair hearings, and both civil rights and non-civil rights complaints. Other topics discussed included migrant reviews, corrective action planning, and optional review areas.

Utah program coordinator Leonard Peevy discussed Utah's experience in lowering the food stamp error rate below the tolerance level. The state accomplished this, despite staffing adjustments, through a redesign of the corrective action planning process. He stressed the value of interstate communication, crediting South Dakota's Food Stamp Program Administrator Julie Osnes with aiding him by sharing her experience with a new computer system.

This was the first such meeting in MPRO and drew favorable response from both state and regional office staff.

-Story by Joanne Widner
MPRO Public Affairs Staff

Friday Letter Vacancy Listing By Vacancy Number

JOB TITLE	AREA OF CONSID.	SERIES	GRADE	CLOSING DATE	VACANCY NUMBER	OFFICE LOCATION
o Clerk Stay in Schooler	(A)	GW-303	1/2	Open	88-SIS	FNS
o Clerk Typist	(A)	GS-322	2/3/4	Open until Filled	NONE	FNS
o Economist	(A)	GS-110	12/13	10/24/88	88-89*	PID
o LMR Spec	(A)	GS-233	9/11/12	10/31/88	88-111	PED
o Nutritionist	(A)	GS-630	11/12	10/31/88	88-112	NTSD
o Secretary (Typg)	(A)	GS-318	6/7	10/24/88	88-113	ASD
o Program Analyst	(A)	GS-345	9/11	10/24/88	88-114	AS
o Admin Officer	(FN-N)	GM-341	13	10/25/88	88-118	MPRO
o Secretary (Typg)	(A)	GS-318	5/6	11/01/88	88-119	ASD
o Secretary (Typg)	(A)	GS-318	5/6	11/01/88	88-120	IRMD
o Secretary (Typg)	(G)	GS-318	5	11/01/88	88-121	FDD
o Regional Admin	(G)	ES-120		11/09/88	88-123	MARO
o Nutritionist	(HNIS)	GS-630	12	10/25/88	88-H-124	HNIS
o Secretary (Typg)	(A)	GS-318	3/4/5	11/01/88	88-125	SFPD
o Supvy Nutritionist	(FN-N)	GM-630	13	11/01/88	88-126	NTSD
o Supvy Food Prog Spe	(FN-N)	GM-120	13	11/07/88	88-127	CND
o Supvy Food Prog Spe	(FN-N)	GM-12	13	11/07/88	88-128	CND
o Food Prog Spec	(FN-HQ)	GS-120	12	10/31/88	88-129	CND
o Food Prog Spec	(FN-HQ)	GS-120	5/7	10/31/88	88-130	CND
o Food Prog Spec	(G)	GS-120	12	11/01/88	88-131	CND
o Secretary (Typg)	(FN-HQ)	GS-318	6	10/31/88	88-132	CND
o Secretary (Typg)	(A)	GS-318	4/5	11/07/88	88-133	CND
o Food Prog Spec	(G)	GS-120	12	10/31/88	88-134	CND
o Secretary (Typg)	(A)	GS-318	3/4/5	11/14/88	88-135	NTSD
o Secretary (Typg)	(FN-HQ)	GS-318	5	10/27/88	88-136	PDD
o Pers Action Clk	(FN-HQ)	GS-203	4/5	10/27/88	88-137	PED

Office location

HNIS - Human Nutrition Information Service
AS - Analysis Staff
PID - Program Information Division (Reannounced)*
PDD - Program Development Division
PED - Personnel Division
NTSD - Nutrition and Technical Services Division
CND - Child Nutrition Division
ASD - Administrative Services Division
MPRO - Mountain Plains Regional Office
IRMD - Information Resources Management Division
FDD - Food Distribution Division
MARO - Mid-Atlantic Regional Office

Area of Consideration

(A) - All Sources
(FN-N) - Food and Nutrition Service (Nationwide)
(FN-HQ) - Food and Nutrition Service (Headquarters)
(HNIS) - Human Nutrition Information Service
(G) - Governmentwide

Linda L. Boling, Editor
Mary E. Kennedy, Assistant Editor

The Friday Letter is published every two weeks by the Public Information Staff of the Food and Nutrition Service. To update mailing address, or to alter number of copies received, please mail changes to the FNS Public Information Staff, 3101 Park Center Drive, Room 823, Alexandria, VA 22302, telephone no. 756-3284.